



Photo courtesy of CHELCO
Member Debra Higginbotham

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A Touchstone Energy
Cooperative



Almost 300 members and their families attend CHELCO's annual meeting

Almost 300 members and their families
attended CHELCO's 77th annual meeting at
Freeport High School on Saturday, April 21.

Purvis, Gray and Company, an independent
audit organization responsible for tabulation
of ballots, announced the Board of Trustee
election results and members' overwhelming
adoption of proposed bylaw amendments.
Members re-elected three incumbents to the
CHELCO Board of Trustees. Re-elected to
three-year terms were Pat Carlyle, District 1;
Bert Prutzman, District 7; and Burt Cosson,
District 9. Members voted by mail prior to the
annual meeting.



**CHELCO members received information from local
charities and businesses at CHELCO's annual meeting.**



**CHELCO CEO Steve Rhodes announced to members at
the co-op's annual meeting there would be no base rate
increase in 2018.**

During his report, CEO Steve Rhodes
announced there would be no base rate
increase in 2018. He also said CHELCO is
returning over \$1.5 million to members in
April and May as part of a special capital
credit retirement because 2017 margins
were greater than anticipated due to
continued cost reduction efforts. Rhodes'
report highlighted numerous performance
improvements and continued cost control
measures.

Following the business meeting, the Board
of Trustees met in a reorganizational meeting
and elected the following officers: President
Gerald Edmondson; Vice President Jim
Bishop; Secretary/Treasurer Bert Prutzman;
and, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Brady
Bearden.

It was the first CHELCO annual meeting held
at Freeport High School. CHELCO chose the

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CHELCO's annual meeting *from page 1*

site due to ongoing construction at our operations center in DeFuniak Springs. Freeport is located in the center of our service area.

In addition to the business report, the event included food, musical entertainment, children's activities, and information booths. CHELCO awarded numerous prize drawings ranging from bill credits to a large screen television to attending members.

TRUSTEE ELECTION WINNERS ▶



Pat Carlyle
District 1
Santa Rosa Beach



Bert Prutzman
District 7
Niceville



Burt Cosson
District 9
Ponce de Leon

CHELCO powers-up first co-op solar array in NW Florida

CHELCO officially began its subscriber-supported solar production with a ceremony on March 20 at its Operation Center located on Highway 331 north of DeFuniak Springs. This is the first cooperative solar power system in northwest Florida and south Alabama.

Subscribers, business partners and local officials attended the ceremony which included a live drone feed of the array and tours of the system.

CHELCO completed installation of

504 solar panels on the operations center roof in March and began the first full month of power generation in April. The solar project, called Cooperative Solar, is fully supported through member subscriptions. The array will be in service a minimum of 25 years producing an estimated 231,000 kilowatt-hours per year.

Subscribers saw their first solar charge and energy credit in their May statements.



CHELCO's 504 solar panel located on the Operations Center roof.



CHELCO CEO Steve Rhodes simulates "Powering Up" the solar array at the ceremony by pushing a digital button.

IN BRIEF

CHELCO returns over \$1.5 million to members in capital credits

CHELCO members who had accounts in 2017 received a bill credit or check in April or May. CHELCO's board of trustees approved a special retirement of capital credits of more than \$1.5 million to members because 2017 margins were greater than anticipated. More than 45,500 members received money back from CHELCO. CHELCO's cost-saving measures generated the larger than expected margins.

Together we can make an impact: advocate and take action for cooperative electricity

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE®) is the grassroots political action committee of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. ACRE represents the interests of CHELCO and nearly 930 other not-for-profit electric cooperative systems nationally and our 42 million members. This PAC supports only federal candidates – those in Congress now or running for Congress – who will speak for and

protect the interests of electric co-ops and our members. ACRE is bipartisan and its contributions are based on a candidate's record of support for rural electrification, not on their political affiliation. To learn more, visit <https://action.coop/>.

CHELCO's website remodeled

Check out CHELCO's new and refreshed website, [CHELCO.com](https://chelco.com). The updated site includes changes to navigation and improved structure of the content, so you can find information easily. The new website is also mobile responsive.



BE PREPARED BEFORE A STORM STRIKES

In the event of a power outage, be prepared by keeping the following items in an easy-to-find emergency supply kit.



■ WATER

Three-day supply, one gallon per person per day.



■ TOOLS

Flashlight, extra batteries, manual can opener, battery-powered or hand-crank radio, NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert.



■ FIRST AID KIT AND PRESCRIPTIONS

First aid supplies, hand sanitizer and at least one week's supply of prescriptions and medications for the family.

Learn more at www.ready.gov



Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

CEO Insights

Steve Rhodes, Chief Executive Officer



We are prepared for summer storms

Summer is here, school is out and families are gearing up for a few months of fun and relaxation. While summer brings much fun in the sun, it can also bring the occasional severe storm. In the event of a power outage, you can trust that CHELCO is ready to respond. Animal activities and fallen trees and branches on power lines cause the majority of outages in CHELCO's service territory. We work year round – through right-of-way clearing – to reduce the risk that power lines in our service territory will be damaged by trees, branches or other types of vegetation.

Despite our best efforts, during major storms, damage can occur to transmission systems, substations and power lines. When this happens, our first priority is to safely restore power to as many members as possible in the shortest amount of time.

We start by mobilizing our line crews and other critical staff. Every phone line available is utilized to take your outage report calls. The big problems are handled first – like damage to transmission lines, which serve tens of thousands of people. These problems must be corrected before we can focus on other areas where more localized damage may have occurred.

CHELCO's line crews inspect substations to determine if the problem starts there or if there could be an issue down the line. If the root of the

problem is at the substation, power can be restored to thousands of members.

Next, line crews check the service lines that deliver power into neighborhoods and communities. Crews repair the damaged lines, restoring power to hundreds of people. If you continue to experience an outage, there may be damage to a tap line outside of your home or business. Make sure you notify CHELCO so crews can inspect these lines.

We will do our best to avoid power outages, but sometimes Mother Nature has other plans. Be sure to check CHELCO's website, Facebook and Twitter on your smartphone for the latest updates during a power outage. We also encourage members to download the CHELCO Connect app to report an outage and other convenient features.



IS \$25 YOURS?

If the account number below matches yours, sign this page and mail it with your bill to CHELCO or drop it off at any office. You'll win a \$25 credit on your next bill.

Gibbons – 4851663

CHELCO CONNECT APP

Don't forget to download the CHELCO Connect app. To use the app features, you must have an online account at CHELCO.com. Your username and password are the same as your online account.

CONNECTIONS CORNER

Co-op Connections discount cards are another benefit of being a CHELCO member. Dozens of local businesses, plus thousands nationally, offer discounts to co-op members. There are also discounts available on prescriptions at participating pharmacies.

This month, we highlight and thank the following businesses.

Gordon Air Conditioning

www.gordonair.com

(850) 682-5214

Crestview

10% off service & repair costs.

Gulf Coast Insulation, LLC

www.gulfcoastinsulation.com

(850) 685-9709

DeFuniak Springs

\$100 off spray foam (energy upgrade), \$50 off cellulose (energy upgrade).

First Command-Brad Hilley

www.firstcommand.com/advisor/Bradleehilley

(850) 613-6585

Okaloosa/Walton County

Financial planning fee waived.

To request a card, or, if you own a business and want to sign-up to offer CHELCO's 50,000+ member accounts a discount, email marketingservices@chelco.com or call CHELCO's marketing department at (850) 307-1122. You can find all the local and national deals at CHELCO.com by searching Co-op Connections card at our site.



Eglin Operations Center ground breaking ceremony

CHELCO conducted a ground breaking ceremony on March 16 for its new Eglin Operations Center on Eglin Air Force Base. CHELCO staff and trustees from CHELCO, along with representatives of Eglin AFB, Culpepper Construction and Baker Engineering attended. CHELCO officially assumed ownership and began to operate the electrical system at Eglin AFB in August 2017.

TIP OF THE MONTH

Laundry Tip: Use rubber or wool dryer balls, which help separate clothing in the cycle, providing better airflow and a shorter drying time. Wool dryer balls can help absorb moisture, which also reduces drying time.



Help CHELCO control wholesale power costs and collect rewards by allowing CHELCO to install a switch on your electric water heater. CHELCO offers members a \$50 payment, plus bill credits worth \$18 per year, for participating in our Switch to Save program.

Call (850) 307-1122 for more information or fill out the online sign-up form at CHELCO.com.

Stay up-to-date on all CHELCO happenings by following your co-op on social media! We are on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

